

Paul's Ponderings

Woven throughout Scripture is the simple truth that none of us were meant to walk alone. God's people were upheld and supported by the Lord and by one another. Support is not optional in the Christian life; it's one of the ways God makes His love visible in the world.



Paul Stasi
Executive Director

The Psalms remind us that God Himself is our sustainer. "Surely God is my helper," David declares. "The Lord is the upholder of my life" (Psalm 54:4). Before we ever offer support to someone else, we stand as those who have first been carried. Every act of care begins in gratitude for the One who has cared for us.

SUPPORT

And yet, God's support doesn't stop with us. It flows through us. Paul's image of the Body of Christ is striking: "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together," (1 Corinthians 12:26). In other words, God has so arranged His people that our lives are intertwined. Your strength becomes someone else's encouragement. Your generosity becomes someone else's rescue. Your presence becomes someone else's reminder that God has not forgotten them.

Scripture gives us pictures of this: Aaron and Hur holding up Moses' weary arms, Ruth clinging faithfully to Naomi, the Philippian church sustaining Paul's ministry when no one else would. Each story whispers the same truth: when believers support one another, God's kingdom advances.

Your partnership is one more chapter in that long story. Through your prayers, generosity, and willingness to bear another's burdens, you embody the love of Christ to those who need it most.

I think back to that statue at Boys Town; the boy carrying another boy, insisting, "He ain't heavy; he's my brother." That image has stayed with me. And it reminds me even now that part of our calling is to bear the weight of the weary, trusting that as we lift them, God is already weaving His victory into their story, and into ours as well.

Thank you for your faithfulness!

3 WAYS TO GIVE

by phone



by mail



online



Giving Any Asset

When people think about giving to charity, they often go straight to writing a check, but it's wise to consider other non-cash options too. Did you know research shows that about 90 percent of wealth is actually held in non-cash assets? Many people incorrectly assume the value of their estate is much less than it actually is — and miss out on important opportunities to further charitable causes or bless their loved ones in significant ways!

Here Are a Few Examples of Non-Cash Assets

- Charitable gifts from a will or trust
- Individual Retirement Accounts (IRAs)
- Real estate
- Business interests
- Life insurance
- Appreciated assets like stocks, bonds and mutual funds
- Farm commodities
- Personal property
- Oil, gas and mineral rights



Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

James 3:13

For more information, please contact Monica Baker, Director of Development, at (904) 421-5147 or mbaker@crmjax.org

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

City Rescue Mission is in need of the following:

- Women and Children Garden:
 - » Pavillion - \$8,000
 - » Two-Bay Post Swing Set - \$5,500
 - » (1) Pavilion table - \$1,250
 - » (12) Pavilion chairs - \$1,500
 - » (3) Pavilion side tables - \$750 social
 - » Fence - \$2,500
 - » Arbor - \$500
- Twin sized blankets (400)
- Twin sized white sheet sets (400)
- Bus Passes: Weekly - \$20 each, Monthly - \$65 each
- Clothing, shoes, and accessories for men, women, and children for the Thrift Store
- Volunteers in Reading, Math, and English to help our students
- White towels (1,000) and white wash cloths (2,000)

Follow Us on Social Media



Contact: Sherrie Mack | shmack@crmjax.org | (904) 387-4357 ext. 224



Board of Directors

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New Life

NEWS

FEBRUARY 2026

VERA
"MY ROAD TO DAMASCUS"
 For decades, Vera's life was marked by emptiness. She made destructive choices and turned away from the Lord. But like Paul on the road to Damascus, Christ interrupted her misguided path, and her life was completely transformed. At the Mission, she discovered His forgiveness, found new meaning and purpose, and now is living for the Lord. Thank you for making her story of grace and redemption possible.

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VERA'S STORY

MY ROAD TO DAMASCUS

Adopted at a young age, Vera was raised in a family of nine children. She loved school, sang in the church choir and developed her passion for cooking while working her first job at a fast-food restaurant. Though her childhood seemed happy, she carried a quiet sadness. "I didn't understand why my birth mother gave me up," she recalls.

"It made me look for love in all the wrong places."



At age 17, Vera became a mother herself. Unprepared for the sacrifice and responsibility that come with raising a child, she fell victim to negative influences and continued her destructive habits.

"I gave several years of my life over to substance abuse."

Her behavior ended her marriage. Her mother helped care for her daughter. She experienced a period of homelessness lasting more than two years. Vera held a steady job, but she also turned to sex work to make ends meet. She describes that time as dangerous and heartbreaking. It offered a false sense of the love she'd been seeking, but it left her feeling spiritually empty.

"My self-worth was so low, I didn't think I could ever have a relationship with God again."

When her emotions left her feeling out of control and struggling to do her job, she reached a breaking point. It was as if God were saying, "Look how far you have drifted."

Determined to change before it was too late, she quit her job and began researching treatment facilities. She was accepted by one in South Carolina, but as she prepared to leave, the arrangement fell through. Then she called City Rescue Mission. "And that's where I ended up," she says. Like Paul's story, she knew God had intervened in her plans and guided her to a place of redemption.

"I had a road to Damascus experience."

In our LifeBuilders Program, Vera found what she'd been missing: unconditional love and a renewed relationship with God. In her first class, she rediscovered that Jesus loved her so much, He died for her.

"It hit me in a way that changed everything. From that moment on, my life was never the same."

Like all in our care, Vera took part in Bible study, life skills training and adult education. Serving on our prayer and hospitality teams encouraged her to grow stronger in faith and confidence. And in our kitchen, her special gift became a ministry of its own.

"Nobody can cook grits like I can – I put a lot of God in my cooking."

Today, Vera is active in her church and dreams of opening her own catering business, Heavenly Home Cooking, where she can share the love of Christ through warm homecooked meals. Most of all, she wants to share her story of grace and transformation with others who are still struggling.

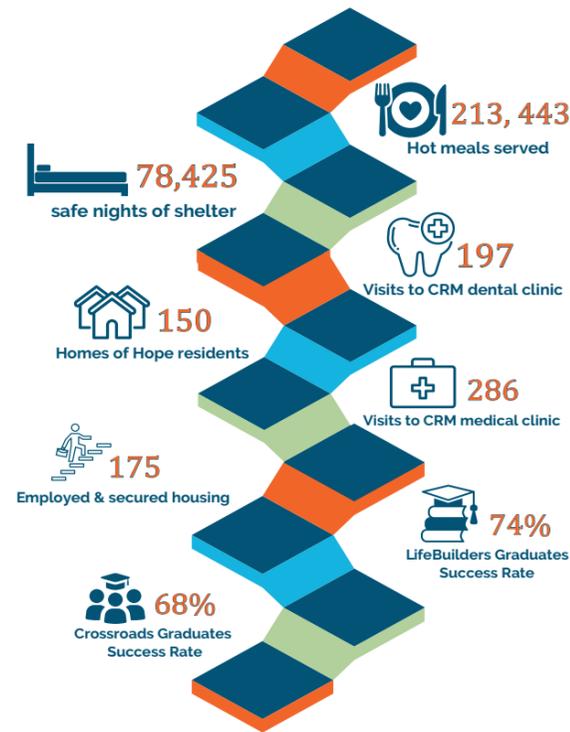
"I am filled with the Holy Spirit, and I'm walking in the light," Vera says. "City Rescue Mission gave me back my relationship with God."

TO VIEW VERA'S STORY
IN VIDEO, PLEASE USE
THE QR CODE



IMPACT REPORT

Through your faithful support, we've been able to care for our neighbors and create real, measurable impact over the past year.



DONATION CENTER

CITY RESCUE MISSION THRIFT STORE

Looking for a great deal and a great cause? Check out our thrift store. Shop for bargains on gently used items while supporting programs that help people overcome homelessness, hunger, and addiction.

Donating is easier now thanks to our remodeled drive-through drop-off:
7200 Normandy Blvd
Monday through Saturday
9AM - 4PM

For bigger items, schedule a pickup at pickupmydonation.com

Great finds. Greater purpose.



Save the Date

80th Anniversary
Gala Dinner
May 7, 2026

6pm | Southbank Hotel Jacksonville Riverwalk

CONTACT

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CRM CAREERS

Looking for a career with purpose? We're hiring for several positions and seeking team members who are called to live out servanthood in their daily work while making a meaningful impact in the lives of those we serve.

Visit our Careers page to explore current job opportunities at www.crmjax.org/about-us/career-opportunities



We are grateful for our partnership with EverBank and their generous support of City Rescue Mission. Throughout 2025, EverBank volunteers contributed nearly 200 hours, serving at our holiday public meals and supporting our program participants through EverBank University, where they shared valuable skills in career readiness and financial literacy. Their commitment continues to make a meaningful impact.